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**EXCLUSIVE: DESIGNING DEEP SPACE NINE**

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# FORUM

## STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE Real science, real science fiction?

By Keith Ferrell



**A** bit of explanation for those of you curious about the somewhat unusual date on the cover of this issue. The dateline identifies this as the February/March 1993 issue.

No, *Omni* is not going into the time-travel business (although we'd love to). Nor are we skip-

other over 14 years, *Omni's* cover date has drifted closer and closer to the actual calendar date. As a result, we've found ourselves enjoying—if that's the word—some very brief display periods here and there. Obviously, we can't let that happen; much as we'd love to believe that our newsstand customers flock to the magazine racks the instant a new *Omni* appears, we also want to offer the longest possible display periods.

So we decided to do a little temporal adjustment, letting this month's cover share the names of two months. As a result, our next issue, April 1993, will be on sale in March, as it should be, and all will be right with the world.

Subscribers will find that their subscriptions now will end with a cover date one month later than previously. Newsstand readers will find a brand-new issue of *Omni* one month from now. We will, in other words, provide a full complement of 12 issues this year, one every four weeks or so. It's just this issue that bears a bit of the unusual.

On to other matters . . .

We're pleased this month to take another look at the *Star Trek* phenomenon, in the form of a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the latest offspring of the *Star Trek* universe: *Deep Space Nine*. This series, we are told, will treat science more seriously than any series in history, including its *Trek*-ish predecessors.

Time will tell if that commitment proves out, but it is indeed past time for more science-bound drama on television and in the cinema. *Deep Space Nine* brings to three, by my count, the number of science-fiction programs on broadcast television. The others are *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Quantum Leap*.

Cable television offers a few more alternatives, notably the Sci-

ence Fiction Channel and Comedy Central's *Mystery Science 3000*, both profiled in *Omni* over the past few months. The declining cost of special effects coupled with the growing need for original programming should prompt an increase in science-fiction series and movies for television in the months to come.

*Omni* readers know as well or perhaps better than anyone the special delights of real science fiction. That those real delights can work in the visual media, and attract huge audiences at the same time, is obvious, and has been for more than a quarter of a century, since the release of *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Perhaps now, as we count down the years to the real 2001, we will see the birth of a true science-fiction cinema, one based on the classics of the field as well as on the concepts that science fiction has made popular. Imagine switching on the television, plugging in a videotape, or standing in line at the movie theater to see dramas based on the works of Aldiss or Asimov, Ellison or Silverberg, Anderson or Simak, Heinlein or Zebrowski, Pohl or Malzberg. There is a lode of eminently filmable material awaiting cinematic development.

The key, I think, for all would-be video science-fiction producers is to take their material as seriously as do the best science-fiction writers. To gaze at the future unflinching, to create universes that have never existed, and to populate those universes with memorable, believable, even recognizable characters.

It's no small task, but the rewards—both artistic and commercial—are worth it. We'll keep you posted in the months ahead about other attempts to bring real science fiction to the screen. ☐



**A new series reinvents the *Star Trek* universe for the 1990s while paying close attention to real science.**

ping an issue or combining two issues or changing to bimonthly publication.

What we are doing—the reason this issue bears a two-month designation—is a bit of calendrical adjustment, primarily for the benefit of the thousands of newsstands that carry *Omni*. The date

on the cover of a magazine, you see, has traditionally served as the off-sale date for that issue. That's why so many magazines bear dates so far in advance of the calendar.

Well, there's entropy in the magazine business as well as the universe at large, and what with one thing and an-











BEHIND THE SCENES OF STAR TREK:

# DEEP SPACE NINE

ARTICLE BY DAVID BISCHOFF  
PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM ZIMBEROFF

Paramount Pictures.  
Sound stage 4.

Security guards patrol here beneath the smoggy Los Angeles sunshine. A vaultlike door swings open, and you walk only a few yards into the dimness, clustered with klieg lights, director's chairs, and busy technicians carrying booms or Panavision cameras or leaning over sound-recording devices. Walk down a corridor past set-support struts, through the smell of sawdust and coffee and makeup. Take a right past a table with scripts labeled STAR TREK.

The twenty-fourth century.

*Deep Space Nine.*

We're sure not on the *Enterprise* anymore, Toto.

We're not soothed and comforted here with soft lights, rounded contours. We're in a space station from an arachnid's *Twilight Zone*. The jagged halls and concourses and Op Center are darker, edgier, alive with alien architecture. Strangeness enfolds you here, surrounding you with odd alloys, twisted graphics, eldritch hues. Los Angeles? Light-years distant. Forgotten. This brooding place is steeped with memories of cruelty and un-human minds.

This is the alien space station *Deep Space Nine*, the next stop of the *Star Trek* saga.

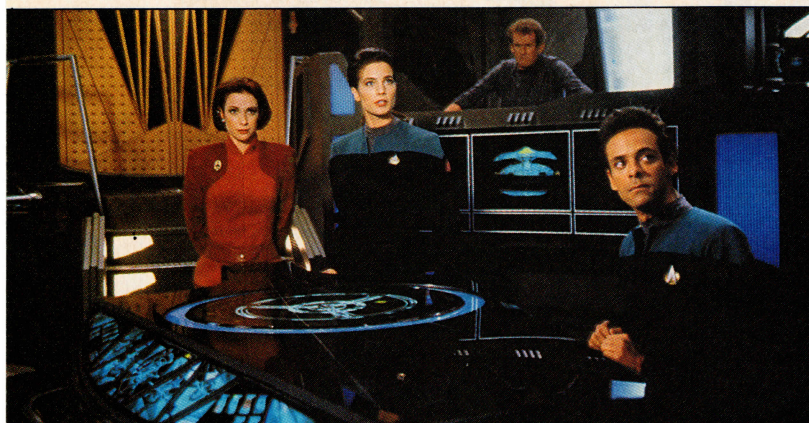
Time to meet the



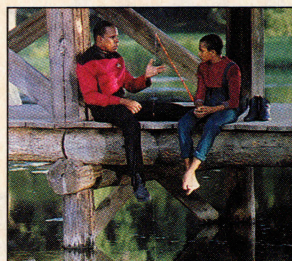


people who are trying to make it their home.

"The vision of Gene Roddenberry was the inspiration for this series," says Michael Piller, one of two creators and executive producers of the new show. "It will be as optimistic and hopeful and constructive in terms of how it approaches the future of humankind as Gene designed it for *Star Trek*." Piller has piloted the



**(Top) The cast. (Center) from left, Nana Visitor as Major Kira Nerys, Terry Farrell as Lt. Jadzia Dax, Colm Meaney reprising his *Next Generation* role as Miles O'Brien, and Siddig El Fadil as Dr. Julian Bashir. Avery Brooks (bottom) plays Commander Benjamin Sisko, with Cirroc Lofton as his son Jake.**



script department of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* since the third season. *ST:TNG* is presently in the middle of its sixth season, with no end of its journey in official sight. All associated with the show take pains to state that *DS9* is not a replacement for *ST:TNG*.

Might *DS9* be considered a complement?

"One of the primary goals in making this series is to do something we didn't have the opportunity to do in *Next Generation*. Gene felt that the human being would evolve sufficiently by the twenty-

## WORMHOLES



A wormhole is a portal through space, and possibly time, created by a black hole linked to its opposite white hole somewhere else. A black hole, of course, is a collapsed neutron star that has teetered past the three-solar-mass limit—calculated by a dying World War I German soldier, Karl Schwarzschild—into the twilight zone of Einstein's General Theory.

It was Albert Einstein, with his Special Theory of Relativity in 1905 and his General Theory of Relativity in 1916, who set up the parameters of infinity. The former, of course, pegged the speed of light for all observers at 186,000 miles per second. The latter showed how the gravitational field of matter defines the universe through gravitational force. The larger the mass, the larger the gravitational field. The very stuff of space and time can be considered physical entities.

A black hole is matter that has become so dense that its center approaches infinite density. It becomes a singularity. Anything that enters gets scrunched. Get too

close and you can't get out. Once you've crossed the event horizon—the area surrounding the black hole where only speeds faster than light can escape—you're there, and presumably in trouble.

Schwarzschild's calculations showed black holes not rotating. In the 1960s, however, M. D. Kruskal, R. H. Boyer, R. W. Lindquist, and particularly Roy Kerr with his Kerr Solution to Einstein's 1916 equations, produced work that showed how space and time could be warped around black holes. In 1973, David Robinson showed that black holes must rotate. The Law of Symmetry would indicate, some theorists speculate, the existence of a black hole's counterpoint—a white hole. Matter sucked in by a black hole near Pluto, surfing around that nasty old singularity but unable to get back past the event horizon, might simply whoosh out through a white hole in Andromeda!

What mysteries will emerge from the wormhole by *Deep Space Nine*? What adventures will be had passing through it?

Stay tuned!



fourth century to lose the petty jealousies and the character flaws that hound us in the twentieth. What that does from the dramatic standpoint is to make it very difficult to get conflict between human beings. So we felt that it was terribly important to put our characters in a situation that would have inherent conflict, which makes it easier to write and also gives us the opportunity to explore the human condition."

"*Deep Space Nine* has more edge to it," says Rick Berman, the show's other creator and executive producer. "I think we've got a remarkable cast of characters. We've got relationships that will accomplish what we couldn't on *Next Generation*. We've got a number of known and unknown actors that are about as good an ensemble as I've ever worked with. We're taking advantage of the production and postproduction group of *The Next Generation*. We've got a family here that's worked together for almost six years and has done some wonderful stuff. It's like a rebirth. We've got a remarkable group of people in front of the camera and behind the camera. That's what's going to make this work."

Berman emphasizes the importance of Gene Roddenberry to the new show. "*Star Trek* is not about the twenty-fourth century. *Star Trek* is about Roddenberry's vision of the twenty-fourth century."

Berman has been with *Next Generation* from the beginning. "Gene and I were close friends. We worked together almost six years. I joined him knowing very little about *Star Trek* and ended up

carrying the flame for him. I learned Roddenberry's languages and beliefs. I became Roddenberry *in absentia*. Everything that *Star Trek* has been is because of Roddenberry's influence on me."

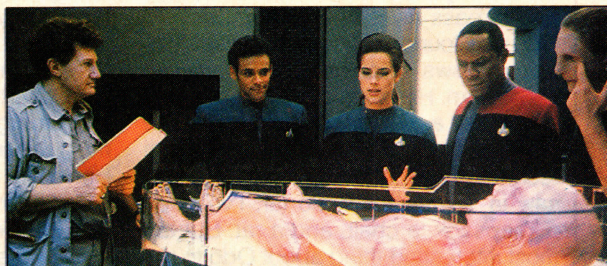
What is the background amidst which this new space station hangs?

Begin with Bajor.

As related in the *ST:TNG* episodes "Ensign Ro" and "The Wounded," a hundred years before, the planet Bajor and its inhabitants were conquered by the ruthless Cardassians. However, Bajoran terrorists have finally convinced the Cardassians to withdraw unilaterally not only from Bajor, but from Bajoran space, albeit leaving behind a plundered and ravaged world. The newly independent Bajorans request entry into the Federation.

hero," says Piller, "a man who is not just the Starfleet officer who has given up family for career, like Picard; not like Kirk, who's one of the boys on a great adventure. He's a man who has had a family and has lost a wife he loved and must raise a son."

"He's very human, isn't he?" comments Avery Brooks, in a powerful yet sensitive voice as he sits in the actors' lounge,



A Starfleet team, headed by Commander Benjamin Sisko, is posted on an abandoned Cardassian space station orbiting Bajor—dubbed *Deep Space Nine*. He brings along his fourteen-year-old son, Jake, and a grudge. He lost his wife to the Borg attack on Starfleet headed by Locutus—none other than the Borgified Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the U.S.S. *Enterprise*, who guest stars on the two-hour premiere due in early January 1993.

"We wanted to create a new kind of *Star Trek*

studying his lines between takes. "So much of the military veneer is not there. He expresses what he feels." A man of great theatrical presence, Brooks is best known for his ten years of stage performances in the title role of Paul Robeson and for his TV role of Hawk in *Spenser: For Hire*. "Sisko isn't particularly interested in being here. He's following orders. He's worried about raising his son in this environment. This station has been devastated. It's very analogous to the present-day urban situation."

**(Top) Nana Visitor. (Center) Armin Shimer as Quark. (Bottom left) production designer Herman Zimmerman (left) and Marvin Rush, director of photography. (Right) Rene Auberjonois plays Odo.**





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The Cardassian space station, in contrast to the sleek and smooth-running *Enterprise* of *ST:TNG*, is a cobbled-together mess, a Dickensian stew of races and technology teetering on disaster. Keeping it glued together is the duty of a transfer from the *Enterprise*, Chief Operations Officer Miles O'Brien, played by Colm Meaney. "It's the exact opposite situation from the *Enterprise*, where everything was perfect," states Meaney. "Nothing works over here. O'Brien is chief of operations on the show, head of all the technological aspects of the stations. He deals with it well—he's pretty competent, O'Brien. He's got a bit of a temper, though, and there may be some spanners thrown." Already on board is the promising character of Odo, played by Rene Auberjonois who may be remembered by most TV viewers from *Benson*, and a gifted, award-winning theatre actor whose classical training is being tapped for this new role.

"This character is just great," enthuses Auberjonois. A startling new kind of shapeless alien makeup through which he's now sipping soup for lunch covers his usually expressive and distinctive features. "He's a shapeshifter. In the pilot, he says, 'I don't know where I came from; I don't know if there's anyone else like me; I've always had to pass myself off as human. . . . Odo was found floating in a starbelt. Nobody knows what he is or where he came from. He takes human shape, but he's really a plasma, a liquid form. The gimmick is that he shifts, using the film technique called 'morphing' which you saw in *Terminator II*. So far, I've been a knapsack, a chair, and a rat. But the most interesting thing about Odo to me is not the shapeshifting, but his perspective on humanity. He's an incredibly honorable character, very humorless which, of course, makes him very funny. He's emotional, but glacial. The character represents the same place in the drama here as Spock and Data in the previous *Star Treks*. His dilemma is that he has been forced to take the form of a humanoid. He's not able to exist as he really is." Odo is a creature searching for his identity.

Quark, played by Armin Shimer, is a disreputable but sympathetic Ferengi who's a bartender in the Promenade, a free-for-all trading and market area bustling with concessions sold by Cardassians to all manner of races. Quark will have his larcenous fingers in all manner of contraband, including the sexual holosuites upstairs in his bar, a kinkier version of the new generation *Enterprise's* holodecks.

Also assigned to the station are Ma-

jor Kira Nerys, a Bajoran former terrorist, a late but crucial arrival to the character roster.

Executive Producer Michael Piller explains her origins as well as the beginnings of *DS9*: "We had created the Ensign Ro character last season and created a set of aliens in the Bajorans and the Cardassians and a situation that was sort of a Palestinian- or Israeli- or American Indian-tale situation of a disenfranchised people dominated for years. Unfortunately, the actress who plays Ro (Michele Forbes) wasn't interested in a series. We had to write her out so that the situation remained. However, from this we established one of the most interesting relationships, which is that of Major Kira."

"I'm a Bajoran and ex-terrorist, an absolute nationalist," says Nana Visitor, a tough, young New York actress, of her character Major Kira in her trailer during a break in shooting. "I would like to see Bajor totally independent. The Cardassians left because Bajor was no longer fruitful for them. They strip-mined it, then took off. But now that it's strategically important, they regret having left and would like it back."

Lieutenant Jadzia Dax serves as the science officer. "She's a Trill, a joint species comprised of two separate but interdependent entities: a host and a symbiont," says Terry Farrell, a glamorous, irreverent lady. She perches atop a barstool in Quark's bar while setpeople work nearby, preparing the Promenade for filming the next day. Farrell was most recently seen in *Hellraiser Three*. Her smile rivals the brightest of studio lights—and her humor is decidedly bawdy. Yet, she plays a decidedly cool and somber character.

How does it feel to have an ancient, brilliant worm inside of you? "Hot!" She breathes huskily. "You'll never know." All the actors seem very excited about the possibilities of their new parts, and she's no exception. "My body and brain—Jadzia—has the hormones of a twenty-eight-year old healthy female. The three-hundred-year old worm—Dax—has the wisdom. I'm the science officer. Dax would say, 'Hey! Sex is just for procreation.'" Farrell smiles coyly. "Though after three hundred years, I would imagine I'm pretty good at it!"

A definite fan of the new science officer is Dr. Julian Bashir. "He has such a puppy-dog crush on Dax," she explains. "The twenty-eight-year-old part is attracted—but the 300-year-old is just amused. It's so much fun!"

"Doctor Julian Bashir is from Earth," says Siddig El Fadil, whose deep, dark eyes and charm may well conquer even the 300-year-old Dax. "He's just left Star-



fleet med school with flying colors. He chose *Deep Space Nine*. He specializes in alien life forms. He's confident because he's quite brilliant. But in real life, he's liable to make mistakes, because real life doesn't work as well as textbooks do."

"We're going to have a lot more humor in *Deep Space Nine* than in *Next Generation*," Rick Berman cites as another difference between the two. Also, it would seem that more attention is going to be paid to alien religions. The Bajorans are a deeply spiritual species. Their spiritual masters are monks who chant in three-chord voices and have their own version of the Dalai Lama—an elderly woman named the Kai Opaka with deep mystical powers. Sisko finds himself consulting with her often. The core of the premiere episode is the discovery in the Bajoran system of the only stable wormhole in known space (see page 36), a fabulous portal to distant points in the galaxy and perhaps beyond. This wormhole is the province of alien beings somehow beyond our own spacetime continuum who have been sending out exploratory orbs.

In the initial episode, it falls to Commander Sisko to communicate with these beings in the midst of a crisis involving Cardassians sniffing around

their old territory.

Ultimately, the wormhole is opened to intergalactic travel, making *DS9* not only a crossroads for ships and excitement—but also the most strategic point in the galaxy for any race with a hunger for conquest.

A likely spot for the clash of science and race and character and ideas.

Supporting this wondrous net of futuristic science and technology are contemporary wizards of artistic science and technology—the special-effects folks, the designers, the sounds and technical people whose work on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* has earned them high honors in their fields.

Rick Sternbach, graphic designer, for example, is also a well-known SF illustrator and astronomical artist. Michael Okuda is another graphic designer who has also worked with Rick and the producers and story editors to forge a coherent world of science and technology—as exemplified by their *Star Trek: The Next Generation Technical Manual*. I spoke to them amidst their art-department computers, props, raw materials, and bustling coworkers.

Both contribute also to another important aspect of *Next Generation*, and now, *Deep Space Nine*.

"Our desire is to do consistent sci-

ence in both shows," says Sternbach. "*Deep Space Nine* might have more action, more adventure. Still, there will be the same constraints, the same philosophy. We believe *Star Trek* has the responsibility to society to teach something as well as entertain. It's not just a TV show. *Star Trek* has gone for quality in a major way. We're socially responsible, but a lot of fun, too. *Trek* doesn't exist to beat people over the head with lessons. But when you total up all the episodes in some future time, I think you'll find that a lot of them will be good lessons that won't be pedantic—not just for kids, but everyone."

Okuda agrees. "I'm most proud of the fact that these are the only shows on TV that say, 'Science is neat; science is fun; science is an endeavor worth pursuing.' In this society, which has become frighteningly antisience, antitechnology, antiintelligence, I'm very proud to be associated with a show that promotes these values."

Okuda and Sternbach police the language of the show as well, reading *Scientific American*, *Aviation Week*, and *Technology Review* to help provide the complex prosody of jargon for which *Next Generation* is famous—and will carry over into *Deep Space Nine*. "A lot of times a term will show up in the show, and then we make sure we use it again," says Okuda.

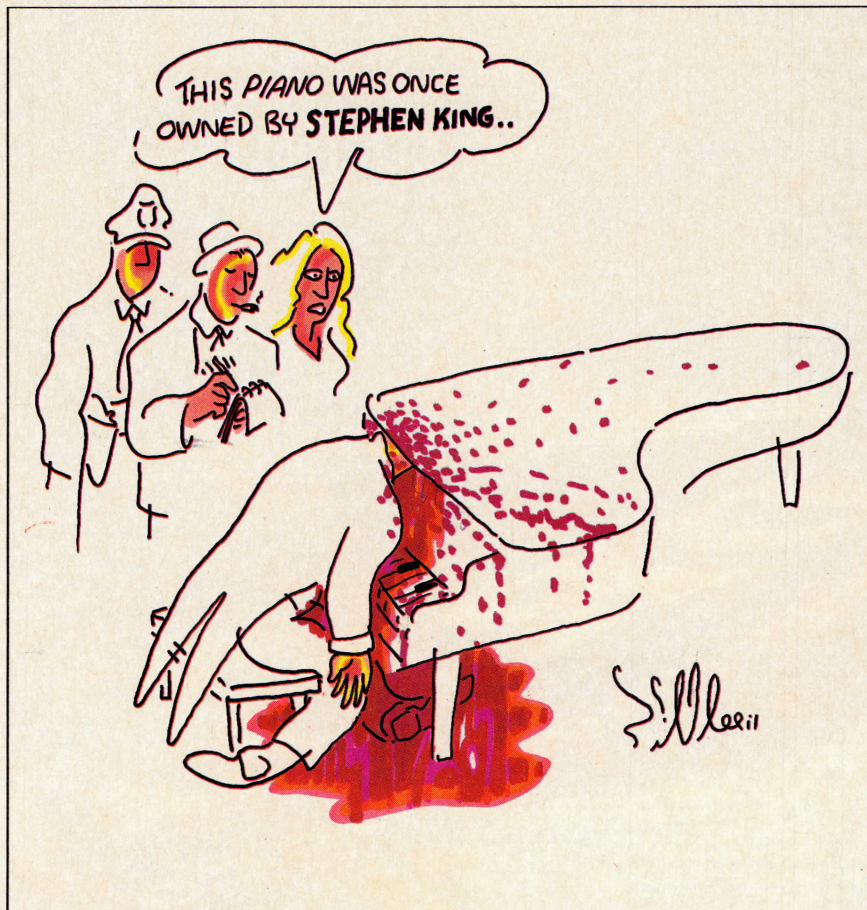
"We feel very strongly, in the spirit of Roddenberry, that the science should be credible," says Michael Piller. "This is not a fantasy. If there is something weird and fantastic, then we must find some way to give it a basis in science as grounding. That's the difference between sword and sorcery and science fiction. We take that very seriously. We'll definitely be pushing the envelope of ideas and concepts in both shows. After two hundred-plus episodes, you're going to start pushing envelopes to go onward with new and interesting ideas."

Postproduction special effects, headed by visual-effects producer Rob Legato, fill in not just the phaser bolts, but the astronomical sights as well, all of which are based on the latest research and scientific speculation as to what neutron stars, nebulae, planets, and, of course, wormholes might look like.

And *Deep Space Nine*, the space station itself?

"I just saw the model this morning," says Herman Zimmerman, production designer, hurrying between set work to view the day's film. "Incredible. The best miniature I've ever seen."

Consistency is not just the keynote for the language and concepts here, but the visuals as well. Each alien culture is analyzed, their personalities re-





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When, in a couple of hundred years or so, historians look back on our time, a small footnote

**How in**

somewhere in an electronic textbook might say of *Star Trek*, "It was a uniquely American cultural

**the world**

phenomenon which occurred in the latter half of the twentieth century, a rich collection of science-

**do you**

fiction stories whose basic and enduring appeal was that they held a positive view of humankind's

**create a**

future. Despite the fact that its messages were couched in a popular form of entertainment, it managed

**believable**

to make a significant impact on scientific thought. *Star Trek's* cinematic voyages into the

**and visually**

awesomeness of space usually asked questions of relevant social significance and, sometimes, offered

**dramatic**

wise and timely answers to those questions, always postulating a rational order to nature and the

**future?**

universe and lauding humankind's highest ambitions and greatest moral and scientific achievements."



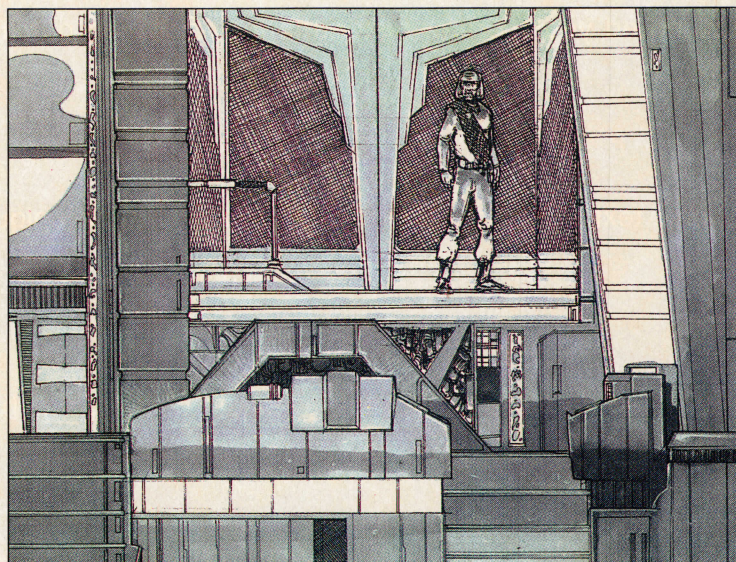
## DESIGNING A BELIEVABLE FUTURE IS HARD AND WONDERFUL WORK.

And if there were room in this footnote for another line or two, it might continue: "The idea of space as the 'final frontier' captured the imaginations of several generations of Americans, made mythological icons of the actors involved, and helped to make popular the notion that, with the help of science, the exploration of space might be possible. In their dreams, twentieth-century men and women projected themselves 400 years into the future, experienced the wonders and dangers they imagined there, and focused on space travel and scientific research in space as humankind's greatest challenge."

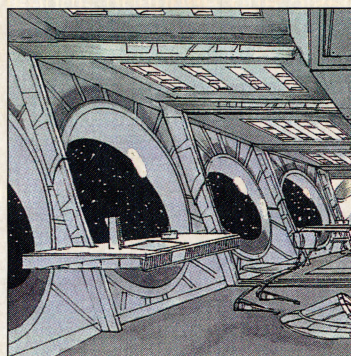
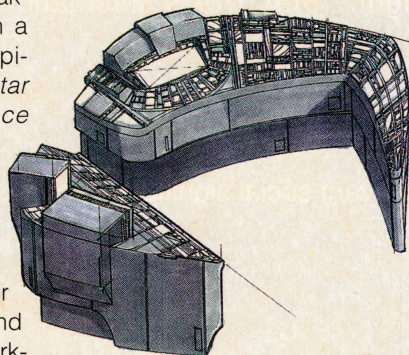
So much for footnotes. Just now, in the 1990s, with the twenty-first century ahead on the horizon, we are still actively engaged in making that history. With a two-hour premiere episode, "Emissary," *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, Paramount Pictures' most recent incarnation of Gene Roddenberry's original series, has once again beamed onto our television screens and promises to be a darker, grittier, more visceral adventure than has gone before.

As the production designer of this exciting new series, I have had the good fortune to be one of a privileged group of artists who have had the opportunity to imagine and give substance to an extraordinary view of the future—one in which racism no longer exists and every person can live up to his or her potential, where disease is virtually unknown, and where science, which has led us to the mastery of our planet and ourselves, has now turned us toward the stars.

Because we have a "willing suspension of disbelief" at work when we see a drama unfold, we may not notice the obvious, but in a very real sense, everything seen on a motion-



**The design team, including Zimmerman and artists and designers Rick Sternbach, Ricardo Delgado, and Michael Okuda, give shape to both the form and function of *Deep Space Nine*'s models and sets. Original sketches are shown here and on the previous page.**



picture or television screen is an illusion. The filmmakers—the illusionists—share with us bits and pieces of their imaginings, which are edited together, sweetened with visual and sound effects, scored, titled, and served up for our amusement.

The motion-picture production designer is the architect of these illusions because, except for the actors, the designer and his or her staff are ultimately responsible for the "look" of everything seen on the screen: all the exterior and interior architecture, all the furniture and furnishings, all the backgrounds, and everything surrounding or handled by actors. The production designer's hand guides the creation of a total environment in which the acting out of a story can seem to be completely believable.

The illusion of the future presents the designer with an unusually difficult challenge. In "slice of life" drama, the designer can count on having available the trappings of everyday life, with the ability to buy or rent or make just about anything needed to manufacture the environment for a present-day living room, dining room, and kitchen, or a rundown neighborhood bar, or the interior of a jetliner. All the elements needed for these kinds of settings can be found and assembled more or less readily out of common stuff. Even historical places and objects from the past can be found and used to create the illusion of a bygone age. But almost nothing about the future exists in the present.

Any person asked to create that which does not exist from ideas which are, at best, fanciful visions written in air has to be an illusionist. He or she is probably a person who always looks at things with an eye to making them more pleasing, more graceful, more functional, or maybe just different—one who sees things as they could be, not merely as they are. It seems likely that such a person would be childlike in a healthy sort of way and ask what-if questions all the time. And if this person is a designer and is interested in science fiction and has available popular science magazines, bulletins from NASA, the work of avant-garde architects and illustrators, and a vivid imagination, he or she might extrapo-



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late from what is happening today in science and sociology and art a version of what the future might look like, and somehow translate that into designs for "real things from the future" that can exist in the present. This is not as weird an exercise as it might seem. For instance, in 400 years, human beings will no doubt still be the same relative size and shape, will still need to eat, will still wear clothing, and will still sleep a certain portion of each day. So, chairs and tables and beds and hats and coats and shoes will still be around. What they might look like is less easily guessed. Microbiology and microtechnology and the proliferation of electronic gadgets and inventions will probably continue well past the twenty-fifth century. And certainly we might expect that there will, finally, be some source of pollution-free power (dylithium crystals?) and that computers (with fiber-optic shunt networks?) will be voice-activated and run everything. So, armed with that information and given a direction from the writers and producers, all the environments for a show or movie must be invented by the designer and manufactured and used in a way that seems correct to the audience.

Last March, a design group was organized by Rick Berman and Michael Piller, the two executive producers and creators of *Deep Space Nine*, and supervising producer David Livingston, to conceptualize an alien space station. The space station would be at the farthest edge of the galaxy, near an M-class planet (the Starfleet designation for a planet that will support human life) called Bajor, and in close proximity to the only known stable wormhole in the universe. The wormhole (see page 36) is a shortcut through space—a passageway to distant, unexplored regions. Its discovery will turn Bajor (and the station, *Deep Space Nine*) into the leading center of commerce and exploration in the sector.

Of Cardassian design and using Bajoran slave labor, the station was built as a platform from which the Cardassian masters could direct mining operations on the planet and transport the mineral wealth of Bajor to their system. However, now that the Cardassians have depleted the planet of its valuable minerals, their interest in Bajor has dwindled, and the station is abandoned by them only to be taken over by a Starfleet crew of officers and Bajoran personnel.

The prime directive from the show's producers was that the station itself must be a principal character in the drama, just as the starship *Enterprise* has been. Further, the size and shape of the station must be instantly recognized,

even at a great distance, and, when seen close up, the detailing must reveal a bizarre alien architecture that's at once fascinating and strange.

The Cardassians are a powerful militaristic race of intergalactic Nazis first seen on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The image they call to mind is of a sophisticated Spartan race: arrogant, intelligent, and cruel, for whom beauty only exists in strength. Their armorlike costumes (designed by Robert Blackman) suggest that like crustaceans, their skeletal structure is on the outside. And their grotesque facial characteristics (designed by Michael Westmore) suggest aggressive personalities that abhor weakness and are quick to anger.

Except for these wardrobe and make-up notes, the design team had little information about Cardassians in general or what a starbase of their design might look like. We had a blank sheet of paper; three large, empty sound stages; and three months before set construction was slated to begin.

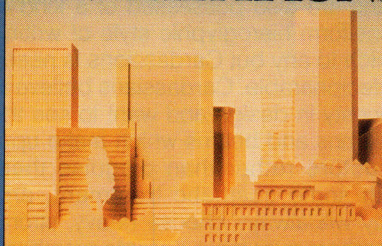
It was nearly two months before Rick Sternbach, senior illustrator, Michael Okuda, scenic-art supervisor (both resident experts on *Star Trek* lore) and I came up with a practical and aesthetically pleasing shape for the station. During that time, *DS9* was alternately a "North Sea oil rig" in space; a 1,000-year-old rust-bucket mining colony built by an unknown alien race; and a haphazardly built collection of diverse structural elements which just "grew" like Sargasso Sea space debris. We did sketches, computer drawings, and models of each idea, but only got on the right track after the producers decided that what was really needed was the most futuristic, technologically advanced alien structure we could imagine. Finally, a sleek, blue-gray titanium and dull-gold kevalite starbase began to take shape—an enormous structure which defined a large mass but in fact contained very little internal volume. In defining this structure, a Cardassian design criteria began to evolve, a criteria which, once it was invented, began to drive the designs firmly in a seemingly correct and innovative direction.

The Cardassians, we discovered, like orderliness in all things, and they prefer things in sets of three. So *DS9* has three horizontal concentric rings, one inside the other, as major structural components. And three connector tunnels (spokes) join the three major rings to each other. Three vertical docking pylons sit on the outer ring, and three vertical weapons towers sit on the middle ring. The Cardassian mind prefers balance to symmetry, ellipses to circles, angles to straight lines, and hard metallic

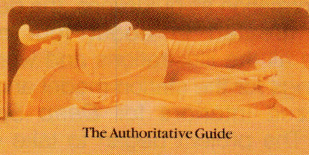
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tics and space and adventure," says Rene Auberjonois. "But the core of the show is about Sisko trying to come to terms with his own humanity and the pain he's experienced. He's quite complex, and it's really a study about how you move on from loss and grief. It's about how we have to move, how we have a sense of time.

"I just saw the movie about Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*. Hawking makes the observation that time is really our invention, that if we can remember the past, why can't we remember the future? This tries to deal with that. We limit ourselves by trying to live in this very linear world.

"I was sitting in my kitchen the other night, having a sandwich. I was very tired; I'd been working all day. I turned on the TV and there was the original *Star Trek*. In the scene, one of the characters was using what I recognized as a Windex spray bottle. Now, I know that when that episode was first aired, it was at a time when such a bottle was not in common use. It must have looked very futuristic then. Now, though, it looked like, well, a Windex bottle! Hardly futuristic. We would be presumptuous not to think that twenty years from now, people—the Good Lord willing—might look at what *Deep Space Nine* uses the same way. I walk around this set and see all the technology and say, 'Wow! Where did they get that?!' But twenty years from now, people might look at it and chuckle like we do at Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. This does not diminish us. Even though *Deep Space Nine* is about the future, we're dealing with the present."

The success of *The Next Generation*, the *Star Trek* movies, and the original series in syndication, has prompted Paramount to invest a stunning amount of money in the new series. The company has committed to produce close to a full season of shows. All people involved share an attitude of excitement and confidence. Other SF shows, of course, have come and gone. The key to *Star Trek's* success is the attention to detail, character, and story that have made it a part of world culture. Science fiction's potential is as vast as the worlds it comprises—vast as the imaginations of mankind and the unlocking wonder of the universes of science.

*Deep Space Nine* appears to be a viable new face of science-fiction television—science fiction period. It promises to appeal not only to those familiar with the jolts of awe and comprehension the genre holds, but to an audience perhaps not yet familiar with science fiction's pleasures, aesthetics, and challenges. ∞

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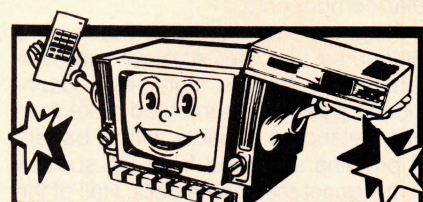
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